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In *Gender and the Violence(s) of War and Armed Conflict* Dr. Stacey Banwell seeks to determine how gender impacts both the perpetrators and the victims within a conflict. She uses a feminist approach, leaning on empirical and theoretical research throughout the book. Banwell believes research should focus on how males and females experience violence differently, rather than answering the question of who suffers more.

Banwell uses qualitative research to look at the lived experiences of actors in the conflict. She presents testimony from survivors, her research, and secondary sources to prove her arguments. She asserts that if people continue to argue that it is more dangerous to be a woman, the differences between the experiences of males and females will never be determined. Without this knowledge, women and their reproductive systems will continue to represent the nation and males will still be expected to be fighters, protectors, and perpetrators. Further, the binary view will continue to get in the way of understanding the full scope of how gender impacts individuals differently pre-conflict, during the conflict, and post-conflict.

For the reasons noted, *Gender and the Violence(s) of War and Armed Conflict* would work well in advanced undergraduate or graduate-level peace and conflict studies or gender studies courses. Banwell does a thorough job defining the terminology she uses and providing an outline for each chapter, making it easy to follow and understand for students. As an undergraduate student myself, I would love to have been assigned this book. However, a weakness of Banwell's work is that it struggles to give adequate attention to male victims.

Unfortunately, Banwell's approach to male victimization is minimalistic. She devotes chapters one through four to female victimization. For chapter five, she discusses females as perpetrators. It is not until chapter six that males as victims are examined. This is surprising as Banwell argues throughout the book that there is a need to look at and do research on the different experiences of males and females. She specifically argues it is the failure to do so that maintains harmful gender norms and prevents us from understanding conflicts. This is inconsistent with Carpenter (2006), who she cites as affirmation for male inclusion.

Banwell appears to recognize the need to focus on male victimization when she suggests more energy should be spent on evaluating the differences in how males and females experience conflict. As Carpenter (2006) mentions there is a tendency for researchers to ignore male victimization,

[1] Banwell, S. (2020). *Gender and the violence(s) of war and armed conflict: more dangerous to be a woman?* Bingley, West Yorkshire, England: Emerald Publishing Limited.

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using the lack of data as an excuse, when they should be drawing attention to the issue and collecting gender-disaggregate prevalence data to close the research gap. Banwell does this when she gives the lack of data on male victimization as a reason for her failing to go into detail about how males experience violence.. Banwell chooses to focus on female victimization instead, referring readers to Chapter 6 for discussion on male victimization. For the reader this is incomplete. Though there is a lack of data, this should not have stopped Banwell from engaging more with the available data.

Sivakumaran (2007) argues that analyzing the issue of male sexual violence may help dispel the binary of females as victims and males as perpetrators. Giving attention to the treatment of male survivors "may prove an invaluable contribution to the fight against sexual violence against women in conflict; ignoring it may mean missing out on a vital component of the issue" (2007, pp 260). By only devoting one chapter to this topic, Banwell provides readers with a book about the female experience within conflict instead of a much-needed analysis of the impact gender has on experiencing violence.

Banwell demonstrates five key arguments throughout the book. She shows us that gender-based violence is not solely an interpersonal form of violence, rather it is also tied to structural violence and State crimes. Banwell also explains how the maternal view of women as mothers to children and as mothers to the nation puts them at risk for reproductive genocide, like forced abortion or forced sterilization. She discusses how gender essentialism, which ties masculinity to war and violence and femininity to victimization, prevents us from understanding and noticing the experiences of male victims and female perpetrators. Banwell mentions how climate variability can play a role within structural and interpersonal violence, both during and after the conflict, because of its intersection with gender. Her final key message, which she works to demonstrate in each chapter, is that violence takes place at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels. She analyzes six case studies in the book, drawing on secondary sources for the Holocaust, the 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh, and Abu Ghraib, and pulling from her research for the DRC, Iraq, Syria, and Darfur.

Banwell begins with the Holocaust and the 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh. She applies the woman-as-nation thesis to both, where women are symbolic and corporeal mothers of the nation (2020, pp 38). During the Holocaust, the Nazi regime attacked the reproductive capabilities of Jewish women through the reproductive violence of forced abortion and forced sterilization. In Bangladesh, the State-regulated motherhood by providing abortions and adoptions for wartime babies to restore the nation and 'cleanse' it from the war. With this case study, Banwell shows the vulnerability of the maternal body during conflicts. She proves her argument that women are targets of violence because of their reproductive abilities.

Banwell then uses the feminist political economy approach to analyze the globalization context and sexual violence in the DRC. She discusses the economic aspect of the conflict, focusing on state-corporate crimes and their interaction with globalization masculinity. Banwell mentions how rape is used to access mineral wealth within the DRC. Rape is also used by individual men to raise their position in the gender hierarchy. She argues that rape is used as a weapon of war in the Congo against females and until immunity is taken away from these transnational businesses, the sexual violence will continue.

Banwell continues her use of the feminist political-economic approach when discussing Iraq and its invasion and occupation by US forces. She argues that because of the economic collapse that resulted from the US invasion, women were forced into the illicit economy to survive. Banwell discusses the viewpoints of radical feminists and sex radicals about sex work, with radical feminists seeing it as intrinsically exploitative and the latter seeing it as a legitimate form of work, if not forced. Banwell tells us that both views have their points and their shortcomings, believing sexual violence is a continuum where choices are "neither completely independent either of its chooser or its context" (Sjoberg as cited in Banwell, 2020, pp 124). Banwell notes there were gender issues in Iraq before, but the US invasion and implementation of US economic policies worsened the sexual gender-based violence, and women were turned into commodities to be trafficked by male criminal networks. Banwell mentions how gender impacts how victims and perpetrators experience conflict differently.

Banwell turns next to gender-based violence in Syria. She argues the securitization and fetishization of rape and sexual violence causes other forms of gender-based violence against civilians to be overlooked. To combat this, she attempts to broaden what gender-based violence is by identifying and analyzing three areas of gender-based violence in Syria utilizing the feminist political economy approach. These areas are the denial of healthcare and safe abortions, denial of education, and denial of employment opportunities. Banwell relates the denial of healthcare to Trump and his administration's decision to cut funding for the United Nations Population Fund. She talks about early marriage regarding denial of education and touches on the informal economy in Syria, with women being forced to enter the illicit economy to survive. Banwell notes the drought in Syria worsened the poverty and unemployment there, forcing women to rely on sex work to survive.

Banwell then switches gears and focuses on women as perpetrators, looking at the sexual and gender-based violence that occurred at Abu Ghraib. She challenges the construction of females as victims and wartime gender essentialism. She uses Feminist Criminology to talk about how female agency, class, gender performance, and the maternal militarized body are seen within the images taken at Abu Ghraib. She also discusses the gender violence and ethics surrounding them, noting that the images fall outside of the tropes of women as victims in need of rescue. She argues her war-on-terror femininity concept explains this juxtaposition, asserting that women are not always victims within a war, and being a perpetrator does not require women to remove their gender identities. Rather, as perpetrators, women challenge the line between masculine and feminine. This is seen with Sabrina Harman, one of the female perpetrators, showing her maternal side in one picture where she is stitching a wound on a detainee and showing her violent side in another where she is smiling over a detainee's dead body. As a reader, I was disappointed that Banwell did not discuss male victimization by female perpetrators in this case study as the omission rendered the discussion incomplete.

Finally, Banwell turns her attention to the experiences of male victims in Darfur. Here, the Janjaweed and other groups of male soldiers committed rape, sex-selective killing, and genital mutilation as a form of reproductive violence against Darfuri men. She argues seeing male victimization as an ontological and maternal impossibility excludes male survivors and ignores the need to confront male-to-male sexual violence. This chapter is the only chapter to thoroughly address male victimization. Because of this, the chapter felt as if Banwell had crammed all her

ideas into it. This led to the chapter being dense and the hardest to grasp of the six. If she would have tied male victimization throughout the book, this chapter would have made more sense. Since she failed to do this, there was no basis for the terminology in this chapter, which led me to be confused about what different terms meant, such as 'maternal impossibility'. However, because this chapter is about male on male sexual violence, it means Banwell did not mention females as perpetrators against males. This failure to discuss how female perpetrators impact male victims leaves out an already opaque area of gender studies.

Despite these concerns, I would still recommend this book, especially to those interested in multidisciplinary works. It was interesting to read about Banwell developing her theories and terms from existing concepts and applying them to different conflicts. This allowed me to see how relevant gender is to the experiences people have within a war. An additional chapter or two focusing on male victimization, particularly with female perpetrators, would have been appreciated. This would have allowed for a new dimension of how gender impacts people within conflicts to be seen and discussed. Although Banwell's book is lacking in the very area she encourages others to do more research in, it also demonstrates and encourages new opportunities for others, and perhaps Banwell herself, to research males and masculinity.

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